RELIGION AND THE SCHOOL

EMIL CARL WILM

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RELIGION AND THE SCHOOL

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THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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PREFACE

THE following essay contains the gist of a view of religious education which has become increasingly clear to me in several years of consideration of the subject. I do not claim for this view any special novelty or originality, but I think it a true view, and one which the progress of time and tolerance will vindicate. I have expressed the same matters in other connections, especially in two recent books of mine, The Problem of Religion, and The Culture of Religion, where the reader will find a deeper justification of my position, in a larger context of philosophical and educational theory, if he should care for it. I have prepared this brief excerpt and summary in the hope of presenting the matter to a larger audience than the above-mentioned books would be likely to reach.

E. C. WILM.

Boston, August, 1917.

I

Alleged Difficulties of the Religious Education Problem

The problem of religion in public education, although doubtless of first-rate importance, is frequently felt to be one of considerable difficulty. While it seems clear, on the one hand, that religious ideas and institutions have been of too great significance in the cultural history of the race for the school wholly to absolve itself of the duty of introducing the child to this part of his social inheritance, grave and insurmountable difficulties are often believed to exist in the way of introducing the subject of religion into the public school. These difficulties seem to me to be largely gratuitous and avoidable. They are created, on the one hand, by a somewhat stiff and one-sided conception of religion itself, and, on the other,

by an obsolete view of the proper methods of religious instruction and training. With the disposition of these initial difficulties, the problem of religion in education will largely solve itself.

Let us make these points somewhat clearer. By religion was formerly and still is frequently meant a system of special theological dogmas, and by religious education the inculcation of these dogmas by more or less didactic methods of instruction. The older-fashioned methods of "confessional" and catechetical instruction, such as has obtained for many generations in Europe, for example, illustrates both the matter and the manner of traditional religious instruction in its most typical (and one is tempted to say, virulent) form. Now, from the point of view of the state, which recognizes and protects equally all religious sects, with their differing theologies, the prohibition by the state of public instruction in any given

system of theology or sectarian doctrine is evidently the only possible course. Even if this legal difficulty did not exist, it is highly questionable whether any agreement would be possible as to what the doctrinal basis of a common religious curriculum should be. Each of the numberless divisions of organized religion possesses a more or less unique system of religious beliefs which it regards as valid, other systems being held or assumed to represent deviations from this norm.[1] In addition, moreover, to

[1] Constitutional provisions forbidding sectarian instruction in the public schools, or the appropriation of public funds for the purposes of sectarian religious instruction, exist in forty-six states in the United States, while additional legal enactments to the same effect exist in twenty-six. State supreme court decisions have been handed down on thirty cases, and while there exists considerable dissent among these opinions, thirteen of the thirty favoring in a general way the religious ideal in education, the trend of judicial opinion seems clearly and overwhelmingly to support the exclusion of dogmatic sectarian instruction from the public school system, the particular decisions favoring religion in the schools turning on points not involving direct religious instruction, but the right to conduct general religious exercises including the reading of the Bible, to enforce decorum during such exercises and the like. See, for a typical illustration of this type of decision, Billard vs. Board of Education, Supreme Court of Kansas (76 Pacific Reporter,

the different sectarian bodies, there is a large and increasing body of thoughtful men and women who have ceased to regard any of the traditional formulations of religious belief, as they stand, as any longer expressive, and who feel considerable hesitation in having their children indoctrinated with ideas and beliefs which they will in their maturity be almost certain radically to recast, or even entirely to discard. Religions and religious sects, in other words, teach beliefs which are of wide-reaching metaphysical import, and carry numberless theoretical implications, which are from the point of view of modern scholarship often of a doubtful or controversial character.

From the point of view of the educator, however, the principal reason against the teaching of dogmas, in the

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p. 422). Compare for a general summary of the legal status of religious education in the United States, S. W. Brown, The Secularization of American Education, Teachers College, Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 49.

sense of ready-made truths, is not legal, nor philosophical, but pedagogical. The most serious blunder of all religious education in the past has been that it has sought to convey to the pupil formally and didactically certain abstract theological ideas for which there was nothing whatever corresponding in his own personal experience. The professions of faith we have often exacted of children have been professions not of their own faith, but of the faith of some theologian long since dead. It is, of course, the same blunder that we have committed in all other branches. Teaching everywhere has been too formal, too didactic, too direct; everywhere has it furnished the child too exclusively with words, and too little with experiences; everywhere has it sought too much to convey information, and made too little use of the child's own activities in observation and inference. Good teaching, especially in the elementary branches, must proceed from the known to the

unknown, from the concrete to the abstract, from the empirical to the rational, from facts to principles.[2] Religion, ever conservative, has notoriously reversed this order. Is it not high time we were applying to the most important and difficult of educational activities those principles and methods which have borne such rich fruit in other branches? We must above all see to it that the child is furnished the concrete data out of which he will, with proper assistance, construct a religious view of the world which shall be in some genuine sense his own, instead of requiring him to learn by rote abstract formulas which his experience has not enabled him to assimilate. Religion not only should be, but to a large extent must be, the normal outgrowth of the various experiences, scientific or otherwise, of life as a whole.

[2] For a classical presentation of the "natural" method of instruction, see Herbert Spencer's Education, a work which is still as convincing and sound, on many points of educational principle and method, as when it was written.

A religious view of the world, if it is to be more than an external accretion, to be sloughed off at the first rude touch at the hands of science or of philosophical reflection, must be in some genuine sense the result, not of dogmatic teaching or authoritative prescription, but of the ideas and experiences gained from the observation of nature and of men, from the study of literature and of science, and of the intelligent assimilation of these inevitable materials of our spiritual culture. We must not only modernize our methods of religious instruction, but carry the spirit of religion also into secular education, and seek to elicit from the teaching materials peculiar to it their unique spiritual and ethical possibilities and significance. If we do not, we must be prepared to expect that religion will remain a mere department of the child's life, a mere addition, destined to drop away as soon as the child passes out from under the immediate influence of

his religious guardians. If, on the other hand, the religious life is based on the solid rock of the child's experience, as gained in life and through his studies, nothing will be able to shake it from its secure foundations. It will have become an organic part of life itself, and it can never be disengaged from the other genuine elements of the child's culture so long as life itself remains.

II

The Materials of Religious Training

We have arrived at an interesting point of view from which to regard the whole problem of the relation of the public school to religion, and to religious education. If the question is asked, What is the *Lernstoff*, what are the proper materials and instruments of religious culture? the answer is, Everything! History, nature study, litera-

ture, the fine arts, mathematics, manual and industrial training, as well as the more strictly religious materials, the history of religions, religious art and literature, anything, in short, which will help the boy to find himself, which will fashion and reenforce his ideals and raise the tone and efficiency of his life. It is a mischievous view, a part of our mediæval tradition, that the more we know about the universe the more godless we become. If God is anywhere, he is in his world, and if we are to find him anywhere, we must seek him in the world which he has made, as this is revealed to us in our experience. As a recent writer has forcefully said, we must comprehend the fact "that the spiritual life is not apart from the natural life and in antagonism to it, but that the spirit interpenetrates all life and that all life is of the spirit."[3] Our

[3] Nicholas Murray Butler, in Principles of Religious Education, p. 18. See also, for a masterly presentation of the general idea of immanence, Professor Bowne's little work, The Immanence of God, which seems to

whole system of education is likely to be a comparative failure unless we recognize this principle. If, on the other hand, we fully adopt it and act upon it, we can, I believe, prove to the world that the public educational system, with its wide and varied curriculum, is an instrument of surpassing promise for our whole social and religious life.

It is gratifying to believe that the view suggested here regarding the relation of the school to morality and religion is one which is thoroughly approved by public opinion, as well as by the judgment of the best educational experts. Whatever the desire of particular individuals may be, it is certain that the mass of people do not want a system of public schools which will leave out of account the development of character, or which will be actively, or

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me to remain one of the classical expressions of the fundamental idea presented here, in a form intelligible even to the nonphilosophical reader.

even negatively, irreligious. If the public schools are "godless," "pagan," and "madly perverted," as some have asserted, it is certainly not the wish of the public that they should be. The resolutions passed by the National Education Association in 1905 are indicative of the opinion of professional educators upon this important topic. "The Association regrets the revival in some quarters of the idea that the common school is a place for teaching nothing but reading, spelling, writing, and ciphering; and takes this occasion to declare that the ultimate object of popular education is to teach children to live righteously, healthily, and happily, and that to accomplish this object it is essential that every school inculcate the love of truth, justice, purity, and beauty through the study of biography, history, ethics, natural history, music, drawing, and the manual arts. . . . The building of character is the real aim of the schools, and the ultimate reason for the

expenditure of millions for their maintenance."[4]

III

The moral and religious influences of the school may be classified as having their origin (1) in the studies themselves, (2) in the discipline of the school, and (3) in the personality of the teacher. I shall discuss these in the order mentioned.

Moral Contents of the Studies

It is, of course, wholly impossible, with the space at our disposal, to treat in any adequate manner the large and important subject of the ethical and religious implications of the various branches of the school curriculum. To trace out completely the full effect upon the mind and character of the various school studies would require a volume

[4] Compare Reports R. E. A., Education and National Character, p. 168.

by itself. No treatment of the subject of the relation of the public school to religious education would be complete, however, which did not contain some reference to this subject.

Two Types of Studies

The various branches of the school curriculum, regarded from a moral point of view, fall naturally into two great classes. They either primarily define and develop the pupil's purposes and ideals, or they primarily equip him with the physical ability, the knowledge and the mechanical skill necessary to carry these purposes into execution. Their aim is either ethical idealism or ethical efficiency. Now, the public school furnishes both these important elements of human culture, and when rightly used has abundant power to make men both more noble and more efficient. What we mainly need is teachers who have a true conception of

their mission, and of the vast possibilities of the studies they are called upon to teach.

The Sciences

The three leading branches of natural science, namely, physics, chemistry, and biology, perhaps occupy the first place in the whole list of studies making for social efficiency. It is through these that men learn how to contribute in various ways to human progress and betterment. The vast advances in all lines of social and economic activity, which the present generation has witnessed, and the thousands of inventions which have contributed so largely to make life more comfortable and effective, have in a large measure been due to the applications of one kind or another of the laws and principles of natural science. The factory, the steamboat, the railway, the steam plow, the reaper, the sewing machine, the electric motor and electric light, the telegraph

and the telephone, the airship, the gasoline engine, aniline dyes, the enrichment of exhausted soils, the discovery of valuable drugs, the marvelous improvement of species of plants and animals, the discovery of the laws of health and disease, of the influences of heredity and environment—these are only a few of the contributions to civilization which the three sciences named above have made.

Nor is the contribution of science to the education of youth merely instrumental and technical. It is often speculative and spiritual as well. Through his study of science the youth often gets his first glimpses of the unity of nature, and of the existence everywhere in nature of beauty and order. In the never-failing constancy of her processes he will perhaps receive his first confirmation of the truth which has often met his ear, but which has so far received little inward response, that God is indeed "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

In the third place, there is perhaps no school discipline, unless it is mathematics, which, if earnestly pursued, is so conducive to the fundamental traits of truthfulness and perseverance; to truthfulness, because the lack of correspondence between word and fact, which constitutes untruth, is here too obvious to escape detection; to perseverance, because the results to be attained in science are specific and definite, rendering it difficult to rest satisfied with a wrong or even a partial result.

The view of the moral and religious possibilities of scientific studies presented here is, of course, a comparatively modern one. It was not until the middle, or even the latter part, of the nineteenth century that the mediæval distrust of science gave way to a more natural and hopeful view of its cultural possibilities.[5] And there are not want-

[5] Compare Monroe, A Text-Book in the History of Education, chapter XII. For the history and progress of modern science, see also Buckley, A Short History of Natural Science; Smith, History of Science

ing men to-day who retain a lingering fear that the study of science will necessarily have a hurtful influence upon religion.

The objections to science usually assume one or the other of two forms. It is often said that the study of science tends to impress the student with the importance of the material and mechanical aspects of nature, so that he will come to regard its purposive and spiritual aspects as subordinate, or even quite negligible. This result does sometimes doubtless occur, particularly in the more advanced branches of physical science. My own opinion is that this view of the world is one-sided and inadequate, and that the enlarging conceptions of nature due to the labors of science have not been of such a character as to invalidate the interpretation of nature as a fundamentally purposive and spiritual sys-

in the Nineteenth Century. For the application of science, Beckman, History of Inventions. For the relation of science to conservatism, A. D. White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology.

tem. And if the teacher knows his business, there is little occasion to fear that the result upon the student's mind above referred to will actually occur.[6]

A second possible danger is that the very complete explanation of the phe-

[6] The idea that the reign of natural law is incompatible with the existence in nature of purpose is a very curious one, and it is nothing short of amazing how it has ever gained the wide currency which it appears to enjoy among intelligent people. It is about as if one should maintain that because hats are made by machinery (the illustration, I think, is Professor James's), they cannot on that account fit human heads, or that because railway engines are propelled by steam power they cannot get anywhere! A very little reflection, however, will make it sufficiently evident that the only condition under which it would become impossible to make hats fit heads, and to make trains arrive at their intended destinations, is for natural law to become inoperative, so that steel would cease to be rigid, water cease to turn into steam when heated, etc. Then all interests alike would remain unrealized, all purposes unfulfilled, and life itself become a sheer impossibility. Indeed, the more one reflects on the matter, the more clearly one feels that the one most important argument for theism which can be produced is the uniformity of nature, the existence throughout it of rationality and order. That the ground is firm under our feet, that water slakes and fire burns, that bodies gravitate, that the sun rises and sets, and the seasons return—that nature, in short, is without shadow or turning—this is the prime condition on which the universe can be either rational or good. For an elaboration of this view, see A. C. Fraser, The Philosophy of Theism, and my own book, The Problem of Religion, especially chapters 4, 5, and 8.

nomena of nature which science offers will obliterate the sense of wonder in the presence of the universe, and thus tend to destroy the sense of reverence which is so central to the emotional responses of religion. Aside, however, from the inadequacy of the mechanical type of explanation which science exclusively employs, and to which I have already referred, complete mechanical explanation, even, is surely nothing more than a scientific ideal, from whose realization science is to-day, and always will be, infinitely removed. Whether the student fully comprehends the important distinction between mechanical and teleological or purposive explanation, he surely can, and usually does, understand the greatly restricted scope of even mechanical explanation. He will hourly have occasion to notice that what science understands is but an infinitesimally small part of the vast areas of nature which remain unexplored and ununderstood. As the late Professor

Paulsen has said, "forsooth we must confess that, remarkable though the progress of science has been during the last few centuries, it has utterly failed to solve the great riddle of existence. Indeed, the mystery seems to have deepened and to have grown more wonderful. The more we study the universe, the more immeasurable seem its depths, the more inexhaustible the variety and wealth of its forms. How simple and intelligible was the world of Aristotle and St. Thomas; into what inconceivable abysses astronomy and physics have since led us! The billions of miles, years and vibrations with which these sciences reckon carry the imagination to the dizzy edge of infinity. With what profound secrets of organization, development, and existence biology sees herself confronted, now that she has learned to manipulate the microscope and has called evolutionary science to her aid! Back to what infinite beginnings historical research stretches the

life of man, which a few centuries ago seemed so clearly and distinctly bounded by the creation on one side, and the judgment day on the other! So far is science from having transformed the world into a simple problem of arithmetic. Science does not carry the thinking man to the end of things, she merely gives him an inkling of the illimitableness of the universe. She arouses in those who serve her with a pure heart, not pride, but feelings of deep humility and insignificance. These are the feelings which inspired Kant and Newton, Goethe, too, is full of this thought: the greatest blessing that can befall a thinking man is to fathom what can be fathomed, and silently to adore the unfathomable."[7]

The Humanities

The ethical and religious value of history and literature lies in their fitness

[7] A System of Ethics, p. 431.

to define ideals and purposes, and thus to give direction to the will. Without attention to this side of personality, the school may easily degenerate into an institution for the training of charlatans. The good will which Kant lauded so extravagantly is not, indeed, sufficient when it is divorced from efficiency, but it is perhaps preferable to efficiency when this is divorced from the good will. What is needed is the union of ethical disposition and ethical efficiency, of the moral will and the intellectual and physical ability to carry out the purposes of the moral will. The training of the intellect is indeed an important thing. But if intellectual training is aimed at to the exclusion of the molding of the moral character, the result may easily be disastrous.

Professor James on Book Learning

No one has recognized this more frankly and expressed it more pun-

gently than the late Professor James. "The old notion that book learning can be a panacea for the vices of society lies pretty well shattered to-day. . . . If we were asked that disagreeable question, What are the bosom vices of the level of culture which our land and day have reached? we should be forced, I think, to give the still more disagreeable answer, that they are swindling and adroitness, and the indulgence of swindling and adroitness, and cant, and sympathy with cant—natural fruits of that extraordinary idealization of success in the mere outward sense of 'getting there,' and getting there on as big a scale as we can, which characterizes our generation. What was reason given man for, some satirist has asked, except to enable him to invent reasons for what he wants to do! We might say the same of education. We see college graduates on every side of every public question. Some of Tammany's stanchest supporters are Harvard men. Harvard

men defend our treatment of our Filipino allies as a masterpiece of policy and morals. Harvard men, as journalists, pride themselves on producing copy for any side that may enlist them. There is not a public abuse for which some Harvard advocate may not be found."[8]

What Professor James says of his own university may be said of every college and university in the land. And this is not an argument against colleges and universities. It is only an argument to show that intellectual training by itself cannot be relied upon to accomplish single-handed the task of completely fitting a man for his work in the world. The clearer understanding, indeed, of the materials and means wherewith to supplement intellectual training so as to fashion character and to awaken ethical enthusiasm seems to me to be incomparably the most important task which American education has be-

[8] Memories and Studies, pp. 350–352.

fore it. It is often said that the object of an education is to enable a man to earn his living; frequently the aim is said to be social efficiency. But a man needs not so much to be taught how to live, but how to live at his highest. It is evident also that a person may be highly efficient, in the narrow sense of possessing a high degree of executive and productive skill, and yet entirely fail. He realizes, perhaps, what he aims at, but he aims at the wrong objects. He is successful in the narrow sense of accomplishing what he set out to accomplish; he fails completely if we judge him from the higher point of view of ideal aims and values. History and literature abound in illustrations of such "failures in success." The failure lies not in the execution but in the aim. Every man who deliberately sets out to accomplish an unworthy end and who reaches it, is a living example of our theme. Education was never more successful than now in rendering

men efficient in the narrow sense of the word. Its great need is to make men also just.

The great sources of our ideals seem to me to be history, and, to an even greater degree, literature and other branches of fine art, using these terms broadly to stand for the whole realm of the imaginative and the ideal, as this has found illustration through human media. Unlike science, literature and art present to us, not what is, but what ought to be. They do not give us a literal transcription of the actual, but an imaginative transformation of the actual into the shapes of the ideal. What never was on land or sea, what existed only in the mind of the prophet and the heart of the seer, that literature and art reveal to us. Science opens to us the wonderful realm of fact; art the still more wonderful realm of aspiration. Literature is too often regarded merely as a sentimental pastime, as religion is too often regarded as a stereo-

typed tradition. But these views do injustice to the true nature and significance of these great interests. If literature and religion were merely a kind of pastime and an outworn tradition, they would not have survived the advances of modern science, and the matter-of-fact mood of our modern time. But they have survived, and are held as precious, because they are the citadels of our spiritual strength; because they save us from the commonplace of fact, routine, and custom, revealing to us values not yet realized, and experiences of strength and love not yet attained.

The Greek View

The sure instinct of the ancient Greek served him here, as it did in other departments. To secure the symmetrical development of all the human powers he sent the young to two schools, the palæstra, or wrestling school, and the didaskaleion, or music school, to the

former for the training of the body, to the latter for the training of the mind, and the cultivation of the æsthetic and moral personality. Literature and music were studied with a view directly to their influence on life; in order, as Plato says in the Protagoras, "that children may be more gentle and harmonious, and rhythmical, and so more fitted for speech and action; for the life of man at every point has need of harmony and rhythm." "Music," says Aristotle, in a remarkable passage which might have been taken from the modern Schiller, "brings harmony, first into the human being himself by putting an end to the conflict between his passions and his intelligent will, and then, as a consequence, into his relations with his fellows."

It may not be out of place, although the passage is quite well known, to quote the testimony of one of the most eminent of modern scientists on the impoverishing effect of neglecting the cul-

ture of the æsthetic side of our nature. After deploring the loss of his early taste for poetry, pictures, and music, Darwin testifies that if he had to live his life over again he would make it a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least every week; "for perhaps," he says, "the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept alive through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

The Theories of Schiller

In modern times the poet Schiller has insisted most forcibly upon the value of the fine arts as a means of moral education. The aid which Kant sought in religion for the transformation of the natural disposition, Schiller sought in art. It would be impossible here to go

into a detailed discussion of the subtle views of Schiller as to the precise way in which the transformation of the natural self into the moral self is accomplished through this instrumentality. His two main positions may be simply mentioned here. He thought of art as the most effective agency for restoring the soul to a state of inner unity and wholeness after it has been disrupted by the various one-sided employments of life. It is only out of the united and inwardly conciliated self that moral action of the highest type can spring. In the second place, Schiller thought of art as accomplishing a subtle refinement of the sensibilities which will result in the immoral, which is always æsthetically ugly, being repugnant to us, and in the moral, which is always æsthetically beautiful, attracting us.

Whatever the precise process may be by which the child is morally refined in being subjected to the influences of beauty, we are beginning to realize that

moral refinement and artistic refinement go hand in hand, and we are already doing much in schools to attain the artistic development of children through the influences, both conscious and unconscious, of art. Through physical surroundings, through school furnishings and decorations, through literature and music, and in countless other ways are we to-day accomplishing the refinement of taste, and thus, incidentally, of the ethical and religious sensibilities of children in the public schools. Nothing promises more, I believe, for the future of our artistic and moral life than this enthusiastic devotion to the beautiful in school life. It is impossible to believe that anyone who has learned genuinely to love the beautiful can ever again be entirely ignoble.

Physical and Manual Training

Physical training, and the various forms of manual and industrial train-

ing, also exercise a moral influence whose full importance has not always been recognized. To the question, "if you had a free hand, what reforms would you introduce in courses of study in order to increase the ethical efficiency of school training?" William James replied, "I should increase enormously the amount of manual and motor training, relatively to book work, and not let the latter preponderate until the age of fifteen or sixteen."[9]

The reasons for the moral efficacy of motor training are many. (1) It has often been noticed that many forms of vice are the direct result of subnormal physical development, or physical weakness. A boy will tell a falsehood during a condition of fatigue when he will not do so in a normal condition. Many persons doubtless yield to various forms of temptation owing to a sheer lack of physical ability to withstand them.

[9] Quoted in Sadler, Moral Instruction and Training in Schools, p. 94.

(2) Any form of physical activity is of intrinsic interest to children, and thus furnishes them with a healthful occupation which has often been found to be of first importance to wholesome development. (3) Industrial and manual training equip the boy for earning his livelihood, and for performing various forms of social service, thus assigning him his moral place in the community. (4) Not the least of the services rendered by these forms of training is the lesson they teach of the dignity of human labor, and of the common man.

Specifically Religious Materials

The view put forward in the foregoing that the whole curriculum and conduct of the school must contribute in a large sense to the ends of ethical and religious culture, and the larger spiritual significance attributed to the so-called secular curriculum, is not meant to obscure the value of the more specific-

ally religious literatures, the history of religious ideas, the poetry and music of devotion, and the other specific means of religious culture which the church and the school have from time immemorial employed. The artificial exclusion of these materials from the schools is not only unpedagogical, revealing a defective sense of historical and psychological continuity in educational processes, but it is unjust to the pupil himself, who is thus deprived of one of the most interesting and significant parts of our common social inheritance. Nothing, for example, is more strained and unnatural than the exclusion from the schools of instruction in biblical literature, a practice in which a surprisingly large number of people concur and which they appear to accept as an educational and practical necessity. "There is no such textbook," as G. Stanley Hall says, "of both the higher anthropology of races and of genetic psychology showing how the individual expands and

approximates the dimensions of the ethnic consciousness." And what is true of the Bible applies to all other religious materials whatsoever, which have historical and cultural significance. As an organic part of the race's culture, they are a part of the child's rightful inheritance, and it is only a fanciless religiosity or an equally hard and one-sided scientificism and secularism which is unable to recognize the school's manifest opportunity and duty in relation to the normal development of the student's spiritual culture.

As regards the question of separate instruction in the Bible and similar materials in periods specially set aside for the purpose, it seems rather important that such instruction should be kept in the closest possible connection with the rest of the curriculum, and that the suggestion of the uniqueness of these materials should be as far as possible avoided. The history of religions and the great religious literatures of the

world form an organic part of general history and literature; and the school, if it takes a large view of its function, will treat these objectively and impartially, just as it treats any other subject. This has been almost uniformly done in the case of history, and there is less and less bias against the introduction of such selections from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as are seen to have literary and general value. In fact, it is difficult to see how such materials are to be kept out of the school. Are we to exclude from the curriculum all literature containing religious teachings? Then we should have to exclude practically the whole of English literature. In the case of history it is equally evident that any attempt to exclude rigorously all historical facts which have a religious reference would do irreparable injury to the study of history. The history of religious ideas, movements, and institutions is so inextricably interwoven with general history

that any attempt to separate general and religious history would result in the thorough mutilation of both. The same remarks apply to religious art, religious music, religious rites and usages, etc. These topics should be treated in their concrete cultural connections whenever the general topics of art, music, ritual, etc., come under consideration. I believe they are generally so treated, and that without objection from any quarter.

The Systematic Teaching of Ethics

This is perhaps the place to say something about the systematic teaching of ethics, courses in which have already been widely introduced into common and secondary schools. In spite of high authority to the contrary,[10] I am bound to believe that such systematic instruction cannot but be of high value to students. A vast amount of private and

[10] See, for example, G. H. Palmer, Ethical and Moral Instruction in Schools.

social immorality is clearly due to ignorance, and would have been rendered impossible by forceful and timely instruction. The question whether such instruction should be given in set lessons, or whether the incidental method is preferable, does not seem to me to be capable of a categorical answer. Much depends upon the age of the pupil, but systematic instruction probably has advantages over the incidental method at all ages. Such systematic instruction will, of course, not preclude the incidental enforcement of moral principle or truth whenever the occasion presents itself in the regular lessons or in connection with the discipline of the school.

The Discipline of the School

This brings us to the second great means of moral and religious influence in public education, the discipline of the school. There is perhaps no more effective means of socializing the pupil

than that intangible and evanescent but very solid thing called the atmosphere and tone of the school. By their tone, says William James, are all things human either lost or saved. It is through the corporate life of the school that the child learns discipline, honesty, deference for superiors, consideration for companions, the spirit of cooperation and fair play, habits of industry, orderliness, punctuality, and a hundred other traits which together make up the complete character. In fact, there is hardly a virtue in the whole catalogue of virtues for which the school does not afford adequate scope and exercise. We are ever inclined to stress the merits of the unusual, forgetting that life is mainly made up of very commonplace and ordinary happenings and duties. Carlyle tells of an artisan who broke the entire Decalogue with every stroke of his hammer. So it is possible, also, to keep the whole Decalogue in every homely deed, so it is honestly per-

formed. The school has no more important duty than to train the young in scrupulousness and honesty in the performance of the small and apparently unimportant details of the school's daily task.

The Personality of the Teacher

The presupposition of all effective influence, both through the studies and through the discipline of the school, is, of course, the personality of the teacher. Religion or irreligion will be present in the school just as surely as teachers are present. There are those rare characters among teachers under whose magic touch the most intractable and unpromising material is transformed into gold, and, on the other hand, no matter how full of possibilities the studies and the opportunities are, they will fail to be realized if the teacher lacks earnestness, insight, and sympathy. The character of the teacher will reveal itself, first and

foremost, in the industry, the care, and the enthusiasm with which he performs his own work. It goes without saying, of course, that the true teacher will conduct all the work of the school in a serious manner, and that ill-considered criticism of anything having either historical significance or scientific interest is entirely out of harmony with the purpose of the school. Intellectual pride is the most unscholarly of all intellectual attitudes, and no one who has not overcome it can lay claim to being a scholar in the best sense, still less a true teacher. Certainly, no teacher has done his work well who has not imparted to the student some conception of the vastness and the intricacy of the world in which he lives, and with it a sense of wonder, from which springs all wisdom, and of reverence, from which spring worship and love.

The personal character of the teacher will, of course, count elsewhere than in the thoroughness and sincerity of the

academic work. His personal attitude toward his pupils, his life and activity in the community, his attitude toward the social and moral issues of the school and the community as they arise from time to time, his tastes, his scholarship, his intellectual hospitality, all these will exercise a steady and pervasive influence, an influence which will frequently determine career and destiny. The increasing emphasis which is to-day being placed upon the personality in the selection of teachers promises richly for the whole future of our schools. The inculcation and enforcement of the ideals of right living and the moral regeneration of cities and nations does not depend primarily upon the church and courts of justice, which have to do with virtue and corruption, whose strength is the strength of years, but upon the home and the school, where life is new and ideals are plastic and where the influences of teaching and example are most vivid and potent.

How the School Can Cooperate with the Church

It remains to mention a number of ways in which the school can contribute more directly and specifically to the religious training of the young, either in the school itself, or by practical and helpful cooperation with its sister institution, the church.

(1) Recognition of religion can be inoffensively accorded by simple religious exercises in the school, either at the beginning or at some other convenient time of the school day. A vital interest in these exercises and the good tact and judgment of teachers will prevent them from becoming burdensome or perfunctory. When well conducted such exercises are extremely effective in creating an atmosphere friendly to religion, and a spirit of reverence for sacred things.

(2) The school can render substantial service to religious education

through the participation of its officers and teachers in the actual work of Sunday school supervision and instruction. There would be two main advantages in this. In the first place, the teachers would bring with them a natural aptitude for teaching, classroom experience, and likely some professional training. Second, the plan would go far toward solving the problem of correlation between the work of the public school and the Sunday school, the importance of which has been assumed in our whole treatment of the inseparable nature of secular and religious training. The regular teacher would be presumed to have an acquaintance with the pupil's other school studies and acquirements which the special religious teacher would naturally not possess.

(3) Whether or not they take part in the actual work of Sunday school instruction, teachers can do much for religious education by encouraging in their pupils regular attendance upon Sunday

school instruction, an indispensable condition, as every teacher knows, of effective work along any line of school work. This is the more important as attendance upon religious instruction offered by churches cannot well be made compulsory, and must depend largely upon the conscientious discharge of their duty on the part of parents and teachers.

(4) The pressing problem of attendance and discipline of the Sunday school can be partly solved through the school by according recognition for work done in the Sunday school through a specified amount of credit for proficiency in religious and biblical subjects. An important initial step in this direction has recently been taken by the State Board of Education of North Dakota,[11] which in 1912 published a syllabus outlining a course in biblical

[11] Also by the public schools of Gary, Indiana, and Greeley, Colorado. The States of Indiana, Michigan and Wyoming are reported also as considering similar plans. See for details Religious Education, vol. IX, pp. 306 and 389ff.

study for the completion of which a half-credit out of the fifteen required for high school graduation was granted. While the teaching of the Bible courses is left to the Sunday school or other outside agency, standardization is secured through examinations which are given by the Board of Education. It is unnecessary to say that the official recognition thus given to religious instruction is bound to dignify and stiffen the work of the Sunday school as nothing else could. In these various ways, then, the three problems which are often mentioned as the three main problems of Sunday school instruction—the securing of trained teachers, of regular attendance, and of proper standardization and discipline—would, through the generous cooperation of the school, get well under way toward solution. Incidentally, the unity of the educational organism, the indispensable condition of the spiritual integrity of the pupil, would be increasingly achieved.

RELIGION AND THE SCHOOL

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Religious Education.

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DEC 6 1961

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